

July 1, 2009

Congressional Delegation

Dear

The United States' Congress is considering a radical restructuring of our national health care system. The actions you take – or that you do not take – could have a dramatic impact on the future of our country and the communities we represent. We ask that you consider the following information as you arrive at decisions.

We agree our health care system is in need of reform. Reform, however, should not be synonymous with government-run health care or put the fiscal well being of our nation at risk. We are particularly troubled by Democrat-sponsored proposals that claim people will be able to keep their current physicians and health care plans. This is simply not possible, as employers will be forced to cancel health insurance for employees due to the billions, if not trillions, of dollars in taxes that would be required to implement health care for all. It is clear millions of Americans could lose their health insurance and be forced into government-run health care under these proposals.

When it comes to government-run health care, we can look at Washington State to understand the potential problems of proposals being considered in Washington, DC. The state's Basic Health Plan, which provides subsidized coverage for low-income individuals, was recently cut by 43 percent. This has led to drastic premium increases, in some instances by 100 percent, and enrollment is estimated to decrease by around 35 percent. Medicaid provider rates have also been reduced, which could lead to even more access problems for those on Medicaid. There is an important role for government in health care, but it should be limited to helping people who truly cannot afford it.

In the 2009 legislative session, we introduced a nine-point plan (see enclosed material) to fundamentally change health care in Washington State. It is based on the belief that people make better decisions about their health care needs than politicians and bureaucrats. The plan would protect those who have quality health care and patient freedom, increase access, lower costs, embrace competition, and fix the state's Basic Health Plan.

We strongly encourage you to consider our plan and the following information as you make important decisions:

- Around 88 percent of Washingtonians currently have health insurance.
- Approximately 51 percent of the uninsured in Washington State are between the ages of 19 and 35, with many choosing not to buy expensive health insurance.
- Government mandates, rules, taxes, and regulations are driving up the cost of health care.
- Medical malpractice laws are forcing doctors to perform unneeded tests and procedures.
- First-dollar costs are driving insurance premiums higher, as people do not see the costs of the care.

Please stand up for American values and its tradition of freedom, and resist proposals that will lead to more costs and less access to quality health care. We can do much better, and the people that you represent deserve much better.

Please contact our offices if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Doug Ericksen, State Representative - 42nd Legislative District
Ranking Republican, House Health Care and Wellness Committee
360-786-7980, email: Ericksen.doug@leg.wa.gov

Mike Armstrong, State Representative - 12th Legislative District

Dan Roach, State Representative - 31st Legislative District

Dan Kristiansen, State Representative - 39th Legislative District

Shelly Short, State Representative - 7th Legislative District

Norm Johnson, State Representative - 14th Legislative District

Joel Kretz, State Representative - 7th Legislative District

Judy Warnick, State Representative - 13th Legislative District

Jan Angel, State Representative - 26th Legislative District

Jim McCune, State Representative - 2nd Legislative District

Barbara Bailey, State Representative - 10th Legislative District

Matt Shea, State Representative - 4th Legislative District

Glenn Anderson, State Representative - 5th Legislative District

Larry Halder, State Representative - 8th Legislative District

Bill Hinkle, State Representative - 13th Legislative District

David Taylor, State Representative - 15th Legislative District